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homemakers' chat

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Friday, August 28, 1942

Subject: "HOW TO SAVE YOUR KEROSENE STOVES." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

SEP 11 1942

U. S. Department of Agriculture

Here's summer almost gone with no mention of that useful aid to hot-weather cooking and canning - the kerosene oil stove. An oil cookstove not only helps keep the kitchen cool but is useful for quick cooking when it would not be worth while to light up a coal or wood range.

Like all other metal household equipment just now, your kerosene stove needs care to make it last and give you best service. No telling when you can get another oilstove if the one you have gives out. So here are tips from home economists of the U.S. Department of Agriculture on use and care of kerosene stoves.

First tip: Set the stove where no draft blows on it. A draft doesn't make so much difference with a big wood or coal range because the fire is in a thick iron firebox. Even so, the draft may slow your fire or make the chimney smoke. But with a kerosene stove, a draft will make the flame flare up and smoke, or actually go out.

Second tip: Be sure the stove stands level. If a kerosene stove isn't level, the oil doesn't reach all the burners evenly. The burner farthest from the oil tank will either be flooded, or it will tend to burn dry and use up the wick needlessly.

Tip number 3: Use kettles and pans with bottoms that are flat and broader than the burner holes if possible. If the bottom of the pan is smaller than the burner hole, heat goes to waste and food may boil over. If food boils over it may crack the enamel chimney or clog the burner and put out the flame.

Here's another tip about your pans and kettles. Center your utensils over the burners, and use pans with tight-fitting covers whenever you can. Foods will

cook faster, and use less fuel. When you have a stew or a pot roast that needs long, slow cooking, and you cannot turn your burner low enough without putting the flame out, use an asbestos mat under your saucepan. That will keep the food simmering.

More tips: Never let the stove or any part of it get too hot. Never wash enamel surfaces of a kerosene stove while they are hot--- top, sides, or oven. Never wash the glass door of the oven when it is hot. If food spills and must be wiped up promptly, use a paper towel or a dry cloth, not a wet cloth.

Now a tip about spots and stains on the stove. Acids of any kind injure the gloss of enamel. So if fruit juices, vinegar, salad dressing or sour milk drops on the stove, wipe off at once. Then later, when the stove is cool, you can wash the enambled parts with soap and water. For stubborn spots rub with a fine scouring powder that won't scratch, such as whiting. Never use a gritty soap, or an acid on enamel. Rinse off soap and cleansing powder. Wipe dry.

Kerosene stoves with wicks may have long-chimneys or short-chimneys. When you want to light the long-chimney type, you turn the wick up to the height of the holder and apply the match. For a minute or two you have the wick low until it heats the metal parts of the burner. Then in about 3 or 4 minutes turn it up till you have a full, steady, blue flame.

But with a short-chimney stove you turn up the wick to the highest position for lighting. Then have the wick high for 5 or 6 minutes until the heat is full and steady. Then lower the wick. It takes a few minutes after you lower the wick before the flame becomes steady. Don't try to hurry it.

Either kind of wick-burning stove needs frequent cleaning to keep in good condition. To clean remove the chimney, the outside collar and the flame-spreader or wick-stop. Turn the wick level with the top of the wick tube, and wipe it with a piece of soft cloth. You can cut off loose threads with scissors, but otherwise,

don't trim the wick. Wipe burners free of any dust or oil with a soft dry cloth. When chimneys are cool clean them with a cloth wrung from soapy water. Stubborn spots may need scouring with a scratchless powder such as whiting. On chimneys made of materials other than porcelain enamel use grade 00 steel wool to remove spots. Then wipe with a cloth wrung from clean water. Dry clean perforated cylinders and flame-spreaders occasionally with a stiff dry brush.

A stove of the wickless type needs different treatment in lighting and cleaning. Start the stove by lowering the burner bowl to give the asbestos kindler a minute or so to absorb kerosene. Then raise the chimney by the knob, light, and wait for a steady blue flame that reaches the top of the perforated cylinder in the chimney. Then regulate the heat - low or high as you want it - by raising the burner. It takes about 6 minutes to get full, steady heat. Now when you turn out a burner, let the flame die down and then lift the chimney above the burner to let the air carry away any unburned oil vapors.

A stove of the wickless type needs to have carbon removed regularly from the burners and kindlers. Carbon is deposited on the kindlers and on the edge of the burner bowl, or it may choke up the oil channel and form a crust over the kindler. This slows up lighting the burner and generating heat.

To clean a wickless stove, take out the kindler by loosening it with a thin steel knife run around each side. Clear the inlet tube with a hatpin, wire, or darning needle. Move the control lever back and forth to make sure that oil runs freely into and out of the bowl. Replace the kindler. Put in a new one every month or six weeks, depending on how constantly you use the burner. Clean wickless burners with a stiff brush. Clean the oil tank and fuel pipe once in about 3 months, according to the directions that came with the stove. Last tip: When you store your stove for the winter, ^{grease} iron or steel parts to prevent rust. Use vaseline or any fat free from salt, and empty the fuel tank and drain the fuel line before storing.

